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New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 40th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. HADID (Algeria)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 122: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1992-1993 (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 123: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1994-1995 (continued)

Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in South Africa (continued) (A/48/745; A/C.5/48/28 and A/C.5/48/48)

1. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to resume its consideration of the financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in South Africa (UNOMSA) and proposed the text of the following draft decision:

"The General Assembly,

(a) takes note of the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/48/28) and endorses the recommendations of the Advisory Committee (A/48/745);

(b) notes that the estimated costs of UNOMSA for the period from mid-September 1992 to 31 December 1993 will be $13,106,100 against an appropriation of $13,044,900 and that the additional requirement of $61,200 will be reflected in the second performance report under section 2 of the programme budget for 1992-1993;

(c) approves an appropriation of $8,994,100 required under section 4 of the proposed programme budget for 1994-1995 to cover the costs of UNOMSA from 1 January to 31 July 1994, on the understanding that these requirements would be treated outside the procedures related to the contingency fund and without prejudice to the future mode of financing;

(d) also approves an appropriation of $1,324,300 under section 28 (Staff assessment) of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995, offset by the same amount under income section 1 (Income from staff assessment);

(e) Concurs in particular with paragraph 8 of the recommendations of ACABQ;

(f) Requests the Secretary-General in administering the appropriations to take full account of the recommendations in paragraphs 9 and 10 of the report of ACABQ."

2. Mr. SPAANS (Netherlands), supported by Mr. RAMOS (Spain), said that his delegation fully supported the Advisory Committee's recommendations contained in document A/48/745. Drawing attention to paragraph (b) of the proposed draft decision, however, he noted that the second performance report contained no reference to UNOMSA under section 2 of the programme budget for 1992-1993. He would welcome an explanation by the Controller of the reasons for that omission.

3. Mr. TAKASU (Controller) said that chapter I, section B, of the second performance report (A/C.5/48/48) dealt with additional requirements relating to the implementation of decisions of policy-making organs and/or unforeseen expenses certified by the Secretary-General as relating to the maintenance of peace and security during 1993 after the revised 1992-1993 appropriations had been approved by the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session. The additional requirement of $61,200 was not categorized under that heading. An addendum to each section of the budget would be issued separately and the expenditures covered in the relevant addendum would include the additional requirement of $61,200.

4. Mr. SPAANS (Netherlands) said that, although he had not fully understood the Controller's explanation, his delegation would nevertheless support the proposed draft decision.

5. The CHAIRMAN said that he took it that the Committee wished to adopt the proposed draft decision.

6. It was so decided.

7. Mr. MERIFIELD (Canada) said that Canada had been a strong supporter of General Assembly resolutions on the situation in South Africa. Through the Commonwealth Office, moreover, it had promoted the boycott against that State, which had helped to produce the political consensus that was currently developing there. The objections which he was about to raise were therefore not politically motivated. His delegation was still in the process of studying the programme budget proposals for the biennium 1994-1995 and was frankly confused by the piecemeal manner in which it was being considered. He would therefore welcome clarification by the Controller of the procedure that was being followed.

8. Mrs. SHEAROUSE (United States of America), supported by Mr. SPAANS (Netherlands), said that she fully shared the concerns just expressed by the delegation of Canada and would also welcome clarification by the Controller of the procedure that was being followed. The Committee was being asked to approve various appropriations in isolation from the programme budget proposals. In her view, a more coherent approach was needed.

9. Mr. TAKASU (Controller) recalled that the Chairman had outlined three procedural options to the Committee, which had decided to follow the established budgeting procedure. Delegations were all aware of the resources that would be available under section 2. Moreover, the Secretary-General had clearly stated that he was unable to absorb the cost in question from within existing resources and that an additional appropriation of $61,200 would be required in 1994.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

10. The CHAIRMAN said that he had informed the President of the General Assembly a few days earlier of the prospects for the work of the Fifth Committee and the possible impact of the Committee's work on the work of the plenary Assembly.

11. Mr. SPAANS (Netherlands) said that he had seen an advance copy of a proposal by the Secretary-General to request a unified lump sum appropriation of $1.5 billion for various peace-keeping operations. In view of the magnitude of the appropriation and the time which the Committee would still be required to spend on its consideration of the proposals for the regular programme budget, he wished to suggest that the first week of February be set aside for consideration of the Secretary-General's request. He noted that detailed reports on a number of peace-keeping operations had already been prepared and urged that all relevant information should be made available to the Committee as soon as possible, without which many delegations might find it difficult to approve the Secretary-General's request.

12. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the report of the Advisory Committee on the Secretary-General's request for an appropriation of $1.56 billion for peace-keeping operations was not a "unified" report, since it would consist of 17 sections. Before the Committee took a decision to defer consideration of the item, it should await the relevant report of the Secretary-General and the corresponding recommendations of the Advisory Committee, which would be issued very shortly. Postponement of consideration of the Secretary-General's request would create a number of problems, since several peace-keeping operations would be without spending authority on 1 January 1994. Other missions would require such authority even before the start of the new year.

13. Mr. MADDENS (Belgium) recalled that, in August 1993, a similar situation had existed concerning the spending authority of a number of peace-keeping operations and wondered precisely what arrangements had been put in place since then. His delegation would, however, agree to await the report of the Advisory Committee before taking a definitive position on the matter.

14. Mr. MERIFIELD (Canada) noted that, in approving the Secretary-General's request for commitment authority in August 1993, the Committee had requested that the item on peace-keeping operations should be programmed for consideration by the General Assembly in February 1994 and that requests for authority in respect of ongoing operations should be introduced in the normal way in November 1993. He would welcome an explanation from the Secretariat as to why that deadline had not been respected.

15. Ms. PEÑA (Mexico) supported the views expressed by the delegations of the Netherlands, Canada and Belgium.

16. Mrs. OSODE (Liberia) fully endorsed the approach suggested by the Chairman of the Advisory Committee. Her delegation had a particular interest in the financing of peace-keeping operations and looked forward to the discussion that would follow the issuance of the report of the Secretary-General and the corresponding recommendations of the Advisory Committee.

17. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that a problem would still exist even if the General Assembly gave contingency authority in respect of some peace-keeping operations. In cases in which the General Assembly gave authority to commit resources with

(Mr. Mselle)

the prior concurrence of the Advisory Committee, the established procedure when the General Assembly was in session was for the Advisory Committee to recommend to the General Assembly the amount in respect of which it had concurred.

The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.